

hours a week to just one report or program or assessment, we take that time away from the residents.

This bill does not aim to reform the entire model or oppress one party involved but, rather, aims to ensure that the time and thousands of dollars spent on assessments here and there are absolutely necessary and that it ultimately benefits the residents in these units. So this bill really does what Congress oftentimes fails to do, which is to provide some much-needed regulatory relief. It simplifies, rather than complicates, the process.

I ask my colleagues to join me in this bipartisan effort to ensure that low-income families have a decent home, regardless of their location. This begins by giving agencies the resources and the flexibility they need to better serve their communities.

#### WATER CRISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again rise to address the water crises that are facing not just California, but our Nation and throughout the world.

Today, global communities and business organizations have joined together, and the White House is holding a water summit to raise awareness of the 650 million people around the world who don't have access to safe drinking water, urging leaders to focus on ways in which we can increase access to safe, sanitary water. This is appropriate, but it is long overdue.

On the Web site, [waterday.us](http://waterday.us), it states: "Water stress is the impact a lack of water has on a particular sector or population. Water stress affects nutrition, public health, environmental services, housing and urban growth, and national security."

□ 1030

And national security is directly related to our ability to grow food to ensure that American consumers are independent and have sufficient nutrition for their daily consumption.

Water, therefore, is a resource issue of the future not only for our Nation, but throughout the world. These impacts of not having a reliable and safe water supply are all too familiar for those of us who live in the San Joaquin Valley in California and my colleagues who represent that area.

So while I believe it is fitting and appropriate that we recognize that there is a nationwide and worldwide issue regarding our water resources and how we manage them—with the planet having 7 billion people last year and by the middle of this century another 2 billion, or 9 billion people—we need to look at both short-term and long-term comprehensive solutions to our water needs not just throughout the world, but here in the United States, specifically, in California.

So I find it extremely disappointing that California's San Joaquin Valley is not at the forefront of this discussion after 4 years of devastating drought.

While I empathize with those in Flint, Michigan, and other areas of the country, like those of us in the San Joaquin Valley, we have been facing water shortages for 4 years; it is getting much worse; and there is less national attention being focused on our plight.

In the valley, instead of lead poisoning due to the failure of all levels of government, as we have seen in Flint, Michigan, we are dealing with waters that have high nitrate levels in drinking water. In addition to that, in many places, we don't have access to water at all.

The solutions are clear. We need to increase Federal funding for infrastructure to build resiliency during drought periods and reduce the impacts of water quality using all the water tools in our water toolbox.

We need to increase coordination between local, State, and Federal agencies to reduce the impacts of communities impaired by water quality or a lack of access to water.

Finally, we need to increase our focus on ensuring that regulations, where they are in place, achieve their intended purpose while minimizing negative impacts that they have with contradictory results.

For instance, due to the decisions made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation is required to operate pumps in California's water system under what I believe are scientifically flawed provisions, biological opinions, which have lost, as a result, hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water.

This year, if the Federal agencies had operated within the flexibility provided even in those flawed biological opinions, San Joaquin Valley communities could have been provided an additional 2- to 300,000 acre-feet of additional water. In addition to that, that would have benefited over 400,000 households.

As a result of the drought and the inability to capture water that is flowing in the system, over 600,000 acres of prime productive agricultural land have gone unplanted, and we have seen families impacted. Families that literally do not have access to water have had to bottle in water.

There is a very certain human toll—the impact—that is taking place to provide highly uncertain benefits for species. This is unacceptable, it is avoidable, and it is immoral.

I urge the Federal agencies to take action to do experimental increases in pumping with increased detection and monitoring so we can find out if, in fact, delta smelt and salmon traveling through the delta are even being harmed by the exact pumping levels under discussion.

So while I appreciate the comprehensive plan the administration is trying

to implement to solve our Nation's water crisis, we need short-term solutions now so that farmers, farm workers, and farming communities in the San Joaquin Valley do not go without a water supply under the Federal project for a third year in a row.

Additionally, we must do everything possible to get Federal legislation passed and signed into law that would not only deal with our short-term needs, but to deal with our long-term needs as well. We passed the House bill last year.

We need to get Senator FEINSTEIN's bill passed so we can go to conference because, if the Federal agencies don't act—and they have not been doing the job that I would like to see them do—then Congress must act.

#### HONORING BERT STEPHEN CRANE, A BELOVED LEADER IN THE MERCED COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a beloved leader in the Merced community, Bert Stephen Crane. Bert passed away at the age of 84 on Sunday, March 13, 2016, surrounded by his loving family.

On November 29, 1931, Bert was born to fourth-generation California farmers and ranchers. Raised on a cattle ranch, he was up before the Sun and out until it came down. During his youth, Bert achieved the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Boy Scout troop 101.

At Merced High School, Bert was the drum major in band and played basketball. After high school, Bert studied at Stanford University and obtained his bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics from UC-Davis.

During his college years, Bert met Nancy Magnuson, whom he fell in love with and later married in 1957. They remained married for over 58 years and raised three children who would follow the family tradition of ranching and farming.

Bert spent most of his life farming walnuts, which he ventured into in the early 1970s after his early career in the beef industry. Bert went on to own and operate a successful walnut-processing plant.

Bert lived an impressive and inspirational life. He was known to have ridden horses with Ronald Reagan, was extremely involved in the community, and had a passion for health care.

He led fundraising events for Mercy Hospital and was instrumental in the development of the Mercy Cancer Center. Bert served on the Merced County Planning Commission for 28 years. His service to his community, agriculture, and research is one of great respect and integrity.

Bert valued and treasured the time he was able to spend with his family above all else. He is survived by his loving wife, Nancy, and his three children and seven grandchildren.